



Presidential Recount Successful

By Melanie Allen, Community Outreach Coordinator

Pamela Swafford, Deputy Director and Joe Mallory, Administrator of the Operations/Supplies Department at the Hamilton County Board of Elections, discussed ballot handling procedures for the 2004 Presidential Election Recount.

This recount required that tight security provisions be put in place which necessitated some facility adjustments including adding double locks on entry doors to the recounting areas.

The double locks ensured that no one party representative could enter the ballot checking area without a representative from the other party. The key to one lock was in the care of a Republican employee



Pamela Swafford, Deputy Director & Joe Mallory, Administrator

and the key to the other lock was issued to a Democrat employee. Both were only permitted to enter the area when a Hamilton County Deputy Sheriff was present.

Two teams each consisting of two Republicans and two Democrats, conducted the actual recount. It consisted of hand counting each presidential punch position on three percent (3%) or 12,992 of the total ballots cast in

November.

State law requires that recount totals match exactly. To ensure the hand count accuracy, each team double checked the other teams count.

The ballots were again counted with an electronic ballot card tabulator. All of the hand counts and the ballot card tabulator counts matched exactly.

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Primary Objectives:

- To provide for fair and efficient elections throughout Hamilton County and to fairly and equitably enforce all rules, regulations and laws that apply to elections.
- To inform and educate Hamilton County residents regarding the election procedures and processes that govern and operate elections.

Chads, Chads and More Chads

By Jerry Collier, Fiscal Officer

Cis for chads, chads and more chads that never seem to end at least for BOE staff who checked ballots for hanging chads as part of the presidential election recount process. All of the ballots cast in the 2004 Presidential Election were checked for possible problem chads.

Exactly 433,058 ballots were checked by 42 employees approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of the new year.

The recount was not an automatic recount (sometimes referred to as a mandatory recount) which is required when the difference in the number of votes cast for an issue or candidate is one-half of one percent or less.

This recount was conducted under a provision of state law that provides for recounts when requested. It also requires the requestor to fund the cost at \$10.00 per precinct included in the recount.

Two 2004 presidential candidates requested and paid for this

recount which also necessitated the chad checks.

“Ballot inspection is a very time consuming process which took several days and the energy of all our staff to complete” stated Joe Mallory, Elections Administrator.

Until a new voting system is available, voters should make sure to check their punch card ballot which is still used in Hamilton County for hanging chads prior to casting their ballots. This simple check by the voter can help prevent possible questions regarding voter intent.

Recount & Chad Check (Ballot Inspection) Open Process..

By Melanie Allen, Community Outreach Coord

Did you know that in addition to voting, there are other ways voters can help to ensure that democracy works? One way—at least until a new voting system is implemented in Hamilton County—is by observing the chad checking process.

Candidates and political parties involved in the recount can designate representatives to observe the process. While observers do not actually handle any of the ballots an extra set of eyes is always helpful.

Observers sit near BOE employees and witness the careful process of inspecting every ballot for possible problems. If observers detect a problem, they notify an Administrator who reviews the ballot in question. Tony Reissig, Administrator of the Operations Dept. believes this type of voter



Unknown Observer and Tony Reissig, Administrator-Operations Department

participation is important for fortifying the public's trust in the ballot checking process. It demonstrates to voters that

BOE officials exceed requirements and expectations to ensure that every vote cast properly is counted.

February 2005 Special Election Underway...

By Joe Mallory, Elections Administrator

It's election time again in Hamilton County and preparations are underway for the upcoming February 8 Special Election. It will include the cities of Cheviot, Loveland and the Deer Park Community City School District.

Although it will be a small election including only 39 of Hamilton County's 1,013 precincts, the preparation and processes are the same as they are for a countywide election.

While this election is certainly scaled down from the past November Election, the same tasks will have to be preformed

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Electronic Voting Update

By Melanie Allen, Community Outreach Coord

Ohio Secretary of State (SOS), J. Kenneth Blackwell withdrew his previous offer to Boards of Elections that permitted the choice between direct record electronic (DRE's) voting equipment and optical scan voting devices.

He announced through a press release that paper-based precinct count optical scan voting devices will instead be offered to county BOE's as the state's primary voting system rather than DRE's which have not yet been certified under Ohio's standards and rules.

Citing that optical scan voting devices are currently more reliable, flexible and affordable than their DRE counterparts, Mr.

Blackwell also stated that optical scan voting devices "will enable more citizens to vote in an expedited manner while providing accurate, dependable and paper auditable results."

His office projects the costs of deploying electronic voting systems with legislatively mandated voter verified paper audit trails (VVPAT) will far exceed federal and state available and anticipated funding as Ohio voter registration rolls have increased significantly since the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was enacted. HAVA is facilitating the changes in voting devices.

Ohio has nearly eight million registered voters—an increase of approximately 900,000 since January 2004. 85,806 or ap-

proximately 9.5% of this increase are Hamilton County voters. Until this announcement the Hamilton County BOE had been planning to implement the eSlate, a direct record voting system, manufactured by Hart InterCivic.

Hamilton County now has until February 9, 2005 to select an optical scan system that is produced by Diebold Election Systems or Elections Systems and Software (ES&S). Both companies' systems have been certified by the SOS.

For detailed information regarding these optical scan voting devices visit the Diebold Election Systems and ES&S websites at www.diebold.com and www.essvote.com.

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 ☆ **Voter Info Tip:** ☆
 ☆ Check our website to ☆
 ☆ view your ballot before ☆
 ☆ you go to the polls to ☆
 ☆ vote. ☆
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Miami University Portable Voter Kiosk

By Melanie Allen, Community Outreach Coordinator

Miami University's Center for Community Engagement and Architecture for Humanity teamed together prior to the November election on a design advocacy project in Over-the Rhine. Using the 1964 Freedom Summer experience as a model, the project focused on the importance of registering people to vote and voting as an important mechanism for dealing with social issues as the impetus of their design. Nearly 60 participants comprised the design teams which consisted of local citizens, artists, architects and students from Miami University, the University of Cincinnati, Pennsylvania State University and Harrisburg Community College in Pennsylvania. Members of Architecture for Humanity came from as far away as Oakland, Ca., St. Louis, Washington DC, Columbus and Boston. Cameron Sinclair, founder and director of Architecture for Humanity flew in from New York City.

With information provided from local socially conscious groups regarding civil issues; information from Hollis Watkins of Southern Echo, a social rights organization in Mississippi regarding voter registration and ***Get Out The Vote*** efforts of the 60's; as well as information regarding voter registration and voter education practices and strategies currently employed by the Hamilton County BOE's Community Outreach Dept., the design team created a portable temporary kiosk that could be used for voter registration/voter information dissemination during election seasons and as a small vender's kiosk at other times. The team constructed the kiosk during one weekend with new and found materials for less than \$100.00. Afterwards, the kiosk was donated to the Contact Center, a humans rights organization in Over the Rhine active in voter registration. Photos of the kiosk are on the BOE's website.

February 2005 Special Election

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such as: ballot language will still have to be approved, ballots will have to be printed and proofed to make sure there are no mistakes on the ballot pages, voting equipment will have to be inspected to make sure it is operating properly, poll workers will have to be recruited, voting supplies will have to be packed and loaded onto trucks then transported to polling locations and the polling locations will have to be rechecked for compliances.

A lot of preparation and manpower is required for any election. However, Special Elections are less laborious because the volume of equipment,

supplies, materials and other items to be deployed are usually significantly reduced from the amounts required for deployment during a General Election.

Efficient deployment planning is the primary factor that will enable the successful transition between the November General Election and the February 8, 2005 Special Election given the short time table we have between these elections.

Often Special Elections are larger than the upcoming one. This Special Election will be small. Most Hamilton County voters will not realize that BOE staff is busy getting ready for another election so soon after the

huge 2004 Presidential Election which was just concluded in December. Contrary to popular belief, the BOE is busy most of the year either preparing for or actually conducting an election.

This year the BOE will prepare and conduct at least 4 and possibly 5 elections this year. Elections scheduled so far during 2005 include the February Special, a May Primary, the Cincinnati Mayoral Primary in September and the November General Election. The fifth anticipated election is another Special which if held will be in August.

For a complete schedule of election activities visit www.hamilton-co/boe.